

On Desire and Death and their Kindred Spirit

On Desire and Death and their Kindred Spirit: A Meditation on the Ego's Temporal Horizon

Indefinite: No one knows when they will die but know that it is certain to happen. No one can say for sure when they will meet the aims of their desires and no one can say either if they will meet the aims of their desires. This indefiniteness reveals something essential about the Ego's temporal structure. Both death and desire operate through what we might call "horizontal uncertainty" - they create a temporal horizon that is simultaneously definite in its "that" but indefinite in its "when." This horizontal uncertainty is not incidental but constitutive of how the Ego experiences temporality through its being of denial.

Definite: Each of us knows that we will die, though we know not when until it is upon us. Each of us knows that we have wants, and though we want for wanting—always trying to get—we know not whether we will get them. The definiteness here points to the Ego's fundamental structure of being-towards-end. Death and desire share this peculiar quality of being absolutely certain in their presence but perpetually uncertain in their fulfillment. This creates what we might call a "matrix of deferral" - the Ego constantly projects itself towards future moments that forever recede, driven by its being of denial.

End: In death there ends this life. In desire there is no end but for the end of its own self.

Here we encounter the crucial difference: death represents a terminal horizon - a final "moment" in the Ego's temporal structure. Desire, conversely, is self-perpetuating - each fulfillment generates new desires, creating an endless chain of moments. This reveals desire as the very engine of the Ego's temporal projection, its endless striving to deny the nothing-there of saturated emptiness.

The kinship between desire and death lies in how they structure the Ego's experience of temporality. Both create a tension between the definite and indefinite, the present and future, being and non-being. Yet their fundamental difference - death's finality versus desire's perpetuity - reveals the paradoxical nature of the Ego itself: forever striving towards what must either remain unfulfilled or lead to its own dissolution.

This meditation points us towards a deeper truth: the Ego's temporal structure is fundamentally shaped by these twin horizons of death and desire. They are not merely psychological states but ontological structures that reveal the Ego's essential nature as a being of denial, forever attempting to create permanence in the face of impermanence, forever seeking fulfillment in the face of emptiness.

The Genesis of Desire and Death in the Ego: An Analysis of Denial's Twin Manifestations

The Ego—that which constitutes what we call consciousness through its fundamental activity of denial—gives rise to both desire and death through its very way of being. To understand how these twin horizons emerge, we must first grasp how the Ego relates to saturated emptiness, the nothing-there that grounds all existence. The Ego exists as denial, specifically as the denial of this fundamental groundlessness. It is not that the Ego chooses to deny—rather, denial is its very being, the way in which it has its way to be. Consider how this denial manifests through what we might call the "elastic ekstatic multidimensionality" of the Ego. Through its engagement with phenomena, the Ego constantly stretches beyond itself, reaching toward what it is not yet while maintaining what it has been, creating the illusion of a continuous self that persists through time. This stretching is not arbitrary but structured by the twin poles of desire and death, each emerging from the Ego's fundamental denial in its own distinctive way.

Desire arises as the positive expression of denial, the way the Ego actively maintains itself through endless becoming. Because the Ego is fundamentally a being-without—arising from the nothing-there that it ceaselessly denies—it experiences itself as perpetually incomplete. This incompleteness is not an accident or flaw but the very structure through which the Ego exists. The Ego must desire because desire is how it creates the moments through which it maintains its illusory self-continuity.

Each desire, in reaching toward its object, creates what we might call a "meaning-density"—a network of significant relationships that give structure to the Ego's experience of temporality. Yet the moment a desire is fulfilled, it immediately transforms into new desire, for if any desire could provide lasting satisfaction, the entire structure of the Ego would collapse. This is why desire is essentially insatiable—not because it fails to reach its objects, but because reaching them is never enough to fill the fundamental lack that is the Ego's very nature.

Death, conversely, emerges as the negative expression of denial—the ultimate horizon beyond which the Ego's denial can no longer maintain itself. Death stands as both definite and indefinite: absolutely certain in its "that" but perpetually uncertain in its "when." This creates what we might call a "matrix of finitude" through which the Ego projects its possibilities. Every project, every goal, every moment of engaged existence unfolds within this matrix, shaped by the knowledge that all possibilities must eventually terminate in impossibility.

Yet death is not merely a limitation imposed upon the Ego from outside. Rather, it is the necessary counterpart to desire, the shadow that gives desire its compelling force. The Ego desires all the more intensely precisely because it knows, at some level, that its time is finite. Death thus serves as both threat and motivation, the terminal horizon that simultaneously limits and energizes the Ego's projects of self-creation.

Together, desire and death create the basic structure of the Ego's temporal existence. Desire generates the moments through which the Ego maintains itself, while death provides the ultimate context within which these moments gain their significance. This creates a peculiar form of temporality—not linear clock-time but what we might call "ekstatic time," where each moment is stretched between what has been and what could be, between the fulfillment that never quite arrives and the end that never quite begins until it suddenly concludes everything.

This helps us understand why the Ego's suffering is not accidental but essential to its nature. The very structure through which it maintains itself—the ceaseless generation of desires in the face of certain death—ensures that it can never find lasting peace or satisfaction. Yet this very suffering points toward the possibility of liberation. By understanding how desire and death arise from the Ego's fundamental denial of saturated emptiness, we can begin to see through the illusion of the separate self and recognize the nothing-there that has been our true nature all along.

Thus, desire and death reveal themselves as not merely psychological or biological phenomena but as fundamental structures of the Ego's existence. They are the twin manifestations of its being of denial, the positive and negative expressions of its attempt to maintain itself in the face of its own groundlessness. In understanding this, we glimpse not just the nature of desire and death but the very essence of what it means to exist as a being whose fundamental nature is denial.

Being's Self-Expression: The Nature of Reality and Temporal Unfolding

Introduction

To understand reality, we must begin with its most fundamental characteristic: Being's engagement with its own nothingness. This engagement is not between two separate things but rather Being encountering its own nature as saturated emptiness - the groundless ground, the emptiness, from which all manifestation emerges. Understanding how Being expresses itself through this engagement reveals the nature of reality, phenomena, and the unfolding of temporality. The Ego, the so-called "I-maker", is a way of being and will be referred to with "it" but is not a thing in the standard sense of the word, being more like a process than an object.

I. The Fundamental Nature of Reality

Reality is characterized by absolute impermanence. This impermanence is not a quality that things possess but rather the very nature of Being itself. Nothing persists, nothing maintains identity, nothing achieves completion or fullness. This impermanence is not a flaw or limitation but rather the expression of Being's fundamental nature as saturated emptiness.

Being is perpetually engaged with its own nothingness. This engagement is not between two separate things but rather Being encountering its own nature. In this encounter, Being expresses itself through a constant process of arising and passing away. Each expression falls away in the very moment of its arising, revealing the fundamental emptiness at the heart of all

manifestation. This does not mean "subjectivity" or "objectivity" since we are talking about engagement, involvement -- primarily, Being's involvement with its own being in the Ego, i.e., the "space" in which nothing allows for the emergence of phenomena.

II. Being's Self-Expression

Being expresses itself through its engagement with its own nature as saturated emptiness. This expression occurs through a kind of inherent "manipulation" - a stretching or warping beyond itself within itself. This stretching is not performed by any agent but is simply how Being manifests in its engagement with nothingness.

The manipulation occurs because Being, in its absolute impermanence, must "grasp" itself to create any semblance of stability or manifestation. This grasping is not performed by anything but is simply how Being maintains any appearance at all. The grasping creates an elastic stretching of Being beyond itself - not beyond in a spatial sense but in the sense of Being extending past its own immediate falling-away. This stretching creates what we might call an ekstasis - a dynamic tension between Being's stretch and its fundamental impermanence. This tension is not held by anything but is simply the way Being manifests in its engagement with nothingness. The tension allows for the appearance of phenomena while simultaneously revealing their fundamental emptiness.

III. The Point of Engagement: The Nature of Ego

What we call "Ego" is merely the point where Being engages with its own nothingness. It is not a thing, not an agent, not a subject, but simply the "unreal center," an open, empty hole, around which Being's manipulation of itself occurs. It is, in essence, saturated emptiness. There is no Ego that performs actions or possesses qualities - it is simply the site, the way of being, where Being's self-manipulation takes place.

At this point of engagement, Being gathers itself together. This gathering is not performed by anything but is simply how Being manifests in its encounter with its own emptiness. The gathering creates apparent stability not through any agent's action but through Being's stretching beyond its own immediate falling-away. Being is always deferred around about this nexus because it is an "unreal" center, there is nothing-there for Being to actually be aside from what it is itself.

IV. The Emergence of Phenomena and the Role of Remnants

Phenomena are not independent things but rather the manipulations, the warped articulations, of Being beyond itself in itself. They emerge at the point where Being engages with its own nothingness (what we call Ego), but this emergence is not caused by anything - it is simply how Being expresses itself through its self-manipulation. These manipulations appear as stable things only because Being stretches beyond its immediate falling-away, becoming "attached" to certain expressions and densities.

This creates apparent permanence not through any agent's action but through Being's own grasping of itself. The stability is entirely illusory - there

is nothing actually stable or permanent - yet this illusion is how Being manifests itself through its engagement with saturated emptiness.

The apparent stability of phenomena is further reinforced by what we can call "remnants." These remnants are not singular but form a network. When Being "passes" into and through Ego, being is stretched and pulled so that what is entirely impermanent appears permanent. The permanent takes the character of a remnant and serves a point that continually points the way. The density of a phenomenon is given by the density of gathering of being that brings that phenomenon forward. These dense remnants hold their density through the potentiality to bring forth what gathers about it to bestow it with such gravity and density.

These remnants are traces of Being's self-manipulation, echoes of its stretching beyond itself. They are not "things" in themselves but rather patterns of density within the flow of Being. Each remnant holds a certain gravity, a potentiality to gather more "being" around it, thus creating a sense of continuity and stability. Remnants are not singular but rather form a network. This network allows for remnants to hold being in a permanence that is "unreal". The remnants forming the network create permanence by having a relativity to potentiality -- being able to perpetually step forward through the way in which what gathers about them is all drawn together about the dense point that they form.

V. Temporal Unfolding as a Function of Being's Self-Manipulation

Temporality emerges from Being's engagement with its own nothingness through the way of being we are calling Ego. This is not a process directed by anything but simply how Being manifests through its self-manipulation at the point we call Ego.

The "past" emerges from Being's grasping of itself, manifesting as the network of remnants. These remnants are neither gone from the present nor present as themselves for the way they presented forth in their actual presenting forth (stepping forward). They are the lingering traces of Being's manipulation, providing a sense of continuity and history, though this history is ultimately illusory.

The "present" is not a moment in time but rather the point of Being's engagement with its own nothingness, existence itself. It is where Being's self-manipulation occurs, creating the appearance of stability through its elastic stretching beyond itself, and where phenomena gather about the ever-deferring "unreal" center they themselves form out of Being expressing the being of saturated emptiness. It is the dynamic nexus where the ongoing process of manifestation unfolds.

The "future" emerges from Being's constant opening to new manifestations. This opening is not created or maintained by anything but is simply how Being expresses itself through its engagement with saturated emptiness. It is the realm of possibilities that are always unfolding in the "space" of saturated emptiness, the nothingness that enables being to be.

VI. The Unity of Manifestation and the Illusion of Self

All of this - phenomena, temporality, experience - emerges from a single movement: Being's engagement with its own nothingness. There is no separate agent directing this process, no subject performing actions, no consciousness creating experience. There is simply Being expressing itself through its manipulation at the point we call Ego.

This understanding reveals that what we typically think of as consciousness, self, or experience is simply the way Being manifests through its engagement with saturated emptiness. There is no separate experiencer, no independent subject - there is only Being expressing itself through its own self-manipulation. The nexus of this network, the Ego, consciousness, is an open, empty hole because it is just plainly saturated emptiness.

Conclusion

This understanding fundamentally reshapes how we think about reality.

There is no separate self, no independent consciousness, no autonomous agency. There is only Being expressing itself through its engagement with its own nothingness. What we call Ego is merely the point where this engagement occurs, not an entity or agent that performs actions.

Understanding this means recognizing that all apparent stability, all seeming permanence, all apparent subjecthood is illusory. Yet this illusion is not a mistake to be corrected but rather how Being manifests itself through its engagement with saturated emptiness. The path to understanding lies not in trying to find some stable reality behind appearances but in recognizing how Being expresses itself through its own self-manipulation at the point we call Ego, recognizing that the fundamental being of reality is impermanence.

Deductive Chain of Reasoning Defining the Nature of Fundamental Reality, Being, Consciousness, Phenomena, and Temporality

I. Premise: The Nature of Fundamental Reality

- P1 (Fundamental Premise): The fundamental nature of reality is saturated emptiness (emptiness, void, nothingness). This is not a void in the sense of absolute nothing, but a "groundless ground" - a dynamic emptiness that is the source of all manifestation.

- o Justification: This is presented as an axiomatic starting point, similar to a fundamental principle in a logical system. It's a foundational assumption based on insight or understanding derived perhaps from contemplative practices or metaphysical inquiry (drawing inspiration from Buddhist philosophy).

- P2 (Implication of Saturated emptiness): If saturated emptiness is the fundamental nature of reality, then absolute impermanence is the fundamental characteristic of Being. Nothing can have inherent existence, independent identity, or lasting stability.

- o Justification: If the ground of being is emptiness, then nothing can be truly separate or self-contained. All phenomena must arise from and dissolve back into this emptiness, implying constant change.

- P3 (Nature of Being): Being is in a perpetual state of engagement with its own nothingness (saturated emptiness). This is not an interaction between two separate entities but an inherent dynamic within Being itself.
 - Justification: This follows from P1 and P2. If Being's nature is saturated emptiness, then its activity must be understood in relation to this emptiness. This "engagement" is the dynamic interplay between manifestation and the groundless ground.

II. Deduction: The Mechanism of Manifestation

- D1 (Being's Self-Expression): Being expresses itself through a process of "manipulation" or "stretching" within itself, arising from its engagement with saturated emptiness.
 - Justification: This is deduced from P3. Since Being is not static, its engagement with emptiness must involve some form of activity. "Manipulation" is a metaphor for this inherent dynamism.
- D2 (The Need for Grasping): Due to its impermanence, Being must "grasp" at itself to create any semblance of stability or manifestation.
 - Justification: This follows from P2 and D1. If Being is inherently impermanent, then any appearance of stability must be a result of a dynamic process that counteracts the constant flux, even if momentarily.
- D3 (Ekstasis and Tension): This "grasping" creates an ekstasis, a dynamic tension between Being's inherent impermanence and its stretching beyond its immediate falling-away.
 - Justification: This elaborates on D2. The "grasping" is not a static hold but a dynamic tension, a stretching that creates the appearance of stability while still being rooted in impermanence.
- D4 (Introduction of Ego): Ego is defined as the "point" or "locus" where Being engages with its own nothingness. It is not a thing, entity, or agent, but an "unreal center" or a "way of being," synonymous with saturated emptiness itself.
 - Justification: This introduces a key term. Ego, traditionally understood as the ego, is redefined here as the dynamic process of Being's self-engagement. It is not separate from Being but the very site of its self-expression.

III. Deduction: The Nature of Phenomena and Remnants

- D5 (Phenomena as Manipulations): Phenomena are not independent entities but "manipulations" or "warped articulations" of Being, arising from its self-expression at the point of Ego.
 - Justification: This follows from D1 and D4. If Ego is the locus of Being's self-expression, and this expression is a form of "manipulation," then phenomena are the result of this process.
- D6 (Illusory Stability): The apparent stability of phenomena is an illusion created by Being's stretching beyond its immediate falling-away.
 - Justification: This combines D2, D3, and D5. The "grasping" and ekstasis create the illusion of stability, even though the underlying reality is impermanence.

- D7 (Introduction of Remnants): "Remnants" are introduced as traces or patterns of density within the flow of Being, resulting from its self-manipulation.

- o Justification: This elaborates on D6, providing a mechanism for the illusion of stability. Remnants are the lingering effects of Being's "grasping," creating a sense of continuity.

- D8 (Network of Remnants): Remnants are interconnected, forming a network that contributes to the overall appearance of a stable reality.

- o Justification: This expands on D7. The interconnectedness of remnants creates a more complex and robust illusion of stability than isolated remnants would.

- D9 (Density and Potentiality): The "density" of a remnant is related to its potential to gather more "being" around it, thus reinforcing its apparent stability.

- o Justification: This explains how remnants maintain their influence and contribute to the ongoing process of manifestation.

IV. Deduction: The Nature of Temporality

- D10 (Temporality as Emergent): Temporality (past, present, future) emerges from Being's engagement with its own nothingness at the point of Ego.

- o Justification: This follows from D4 and the dynamic nature of Being's self-expression. Time is not a fundamental reality but a consequence of Being's activity.

- D11 (Past as Remnants): The "past" is constituted by the network of remnants, the lingering traces of Being's self-manipulation.

- o Justification: This connects D7, D8, and D10. The past is not a separate realm but the accumulated effect of remnants within the ongoing flow of Being.

- D12 (Present as Point of Engagement): The "present" is the dynamic point of Being's engagement with saturated emptiness, the locus of Ego, where the ongoing process of manifestation unfolds.

- o Justification: This follows from D4 and D10. The present is not a static moment but the active site of Being's self-expression.

- D13 (Future as Potentiality): The "future" is the realm of possibilities inherent in saturated emptiness, the openness that allows for new manifestations to emerge.

- o Justification: This follows from P1 and D10. The future is not predetermined but arises from the inherent potentiality within the groundless ground.

V. Conclusion: The Unity of Being and the Illusion of Self

- C1 (Unity of Manifestation): All phenomena, temporality, and experience are manifestations of a single, unified process: Being's engagement with its own nothingness (saturated emptiness).

- o Justification: This is the culmination of the entire deductive chain. All aspects of reality are traced back to the fundamental dynamic of Being's self-expression.

- C2 (Illusion of Self): The sense of a separate self, agent, or experiencer is an illusion arising from the misidentification of Ego as an independent entity.
 - o Justification: This follows from D4, D5, and C1. Since Ego is not a separate entity but the locus of Being's self-expression, the sense of self that arises from it is not ultimately real.
 - C3 (Implication for Understanding): True understanding involves recognizing the illusory nature of stability, permanence, and separate selfhood, and realizing that reality is a dynamic process of Being's self-expression through its engagement with saturated emptiness.
 - o Justification: This is the ultimate conclusion, drawing out the implications of the entire deductive chain for our understanding of reality.
- Critical Considerations:
- Axiomatic Starting Point: The entire logical chain rests on the initial premise of saturated emptiness as the fundamental nature of reality. This premise is not empirically verifiable in a conventional sense but is presented as a foundational truth.
 - Metaphorical Language: The use of terms like "manipulation," "stretching," and "grasping" are metaphorical descriptions of a process that is ultimately beyond conceptual understanding. These metaphors should not be taken literally.
 - Potential for Circularity: The argument could be seen as circular in that it defines Ego in terms of Being's engagement with saturated emptiness, and then uses Ego to explain the manifestation of phenomena from saturated emptiness. However, this circularity might be inherent in trying to describe a non-dualistic reality using dualistic language.